



"Regions, Cities, Neighbourhoods - strong Partners"

RegGov

Regional Governance of Sustainable Integrated
Development of Deprived Urban Areas

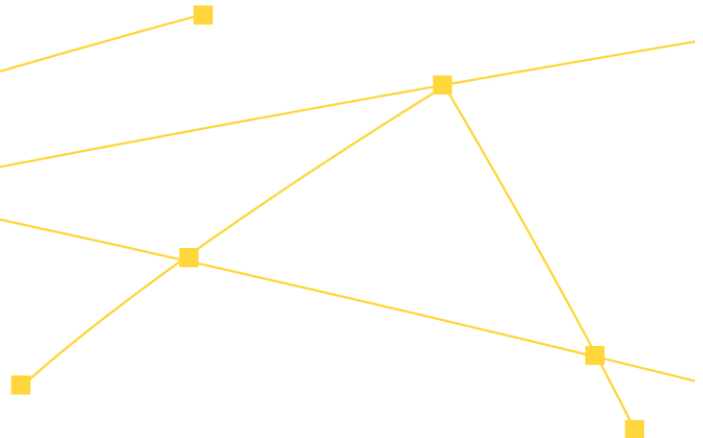
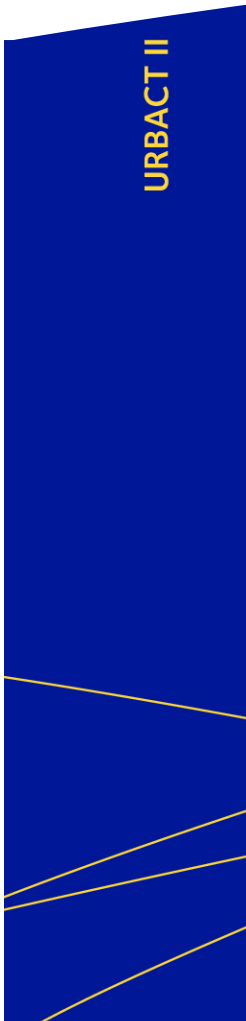
Local Action Plan

English abstract



City of Södertälje, Sweden

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European Union
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Connecting cities
Building successes





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I. Description of the RegGov target area

The City of Södertälje

Södertälje is the 20th largest city in Sweden, with almost 86 000 inhabitants, of which 45% has a foreign background. The city grew during the 1960s and 1970s due to the expansion of the local industry. The two dominating employers are the truck and bus constructing company of *Scania* and the medicine producing company of *AstraZeneca*, two of the largest exporting international companies in Sweden, which have their main offices in the city. *Scania* is world famous for its trucks and buses. *AstraZeneca*, the second largest employer in the city, is one of the world's leading medicine companies. The company has research centres and manufacturing in the city. Including the Municipality Services itself, the three organizations employ approx. 21,000 persons. This makes Södertälje a regional labour market for the Stockholm region as well as for municipalities south of Södertälje.

Apart from these two multinational companies, the labour market is dominated by small companies catering to restaurants and service businesses. Compared to other cities in Sweden there are quite a number of service companies – laundries, hairdressers, kiosks, restaurants and cafés.

Södertälje attracts large numbers of commuters. Every day more than 17 300 persons commute to the city, mostly to jobs with *Scania* or *AstraZeneca*. In contrast to the high-tech industry and urban environment in Södertälje, the southern part of the municipality has one of the largest anthroposophy centres in the world. In the district of Ytterjärna, there are housing areas, hospitals, schools of various educational levels, food production, agricultural production and research, a centre for culture - all built according to the ecological and humanistic ideas of the anthroposophical movement.

Housing areas

Although the history of Södertälje goes back to the times of the Vikings and their settlements in the wider area of the Stockholm Region, the physical structure of Södertälje as it remains today was shaped during the 1960s and the

then prevailing planning ideals. The outskirts of the city centre of Södertälje were modelled after the national “Million Homes Programme”, in which Sweden, within a period of ten years, was supposed to build one million flats. This resulted in neighbourhoods dominated by blocks of flats, mostly for rent. In Södertälje, the residential areas of Fornhöjden, Hovsjö, Geneta and Ronna were created to serve a growing population of workers and their families moving to Södertälje from the Swedish and Finnish countryside for work within the expanding industry.

Over time, beginning with the recession of the early 1970s and the rationalisation of the production processes in the industrial plants, there was a change from Nordic working class residents to immigrant families from the Middle East – mostly Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. This process is still prevailing today: The four residential areas together comprise the settlement for about 85-90% of inhabitants of the first and second generation of immigrants. This is where 25% of the total number of inhabitants of Södertälje lives.

Demography

There are two dominating minority ethnic groups in Södertälje, the Finns from Finland and the Assyrian/Syrians, a Christian minority group from parts of Turkey, Syria and Lebanon. Recently, with a starting point that coincides with the outbreak of the US invasion of Iraq, Södertälje has had, and still has, an extensive immigration flow of refugees from Iraq. In recent years, more than 10 000 Iraqi refugees have settled in Södertälje, and the city alone has received more Iraqi refugees than USA and Canada together. Since most of the population of Assyrian/Syrian origin resides in the four residential areas – and many of them are Arabic speaking – the Iraqis have chosen to settle in those areas as well. Altogether, the population in the four areas ranges between 4 000 and 7 500 inhabitants respectively.

Employment

Generally the rate of unemployment in Södertälje is higher than the Stockholm average. The separate unemployment rate for the four residential areas of Fornhöjden, Hovsjö, Geneta and Ronna is three times higher than

the rest of the city of Södertälje. This is due to a number of factors. A number of citizens of foreign descent are excluded from the labour market since they are not proficient in the Swedish language. Their education is not easily transformed to the Swedish standards, or they do not have an education at all. In the span of one hundred years, for the first time the Swedish educational system has also had to confront the pedagogical problem of illiteracy. Some of the immigrant and refugee women have never worked professionally before. These aspects have a wide impact on the city's economy, as well as on the immigrant families themselves. As a result, the dependency on social benefits and welfare is widespread.

The area of Ronna

The target area of the Local Action Plan is the residential area of Ronna, which is geographically situated in the southwest of Södertälje. The planning and construction of Ronna was completed in the late 1960s. The area of Ronna consists of large apartment blocks built between 1965 and 1967, as a result of the national "Million Homes Programme". Parts of Ronna consist of self-contained houses and a few blocks of semi-detached houses. Some exterior renewal projects of the housing blocks have been made during the last 40 years, including the construction of flats on top of the Ronna's "suburban" centre.

When built in the 1960s, the centre was supposed to cater to most of the needs of the population in the area. There was a post office, a church, a leisure centre, a number of shops for daily needs of food and beverages etc. At the post office you could also take care of your banking business. Over time, all these facilities in the neighbourhood have been reduced to a number of general infrastructural rationalisations – for example, the post office, bank, the Coop food and beverage shop have all gone. The leisure centre was at first moved to the primary school, then later to one of the other primary school buildings on the outskirts of the Ronna area. In the mid '80s, the public library was closed and the residents and public library visitors were given the advice to make use of the central public library in the middle of Södertälje City. In 2003, Ronna Centre was

sold to a private company by the public housing company Telge.

Only recently, some adjustments to the main street have been made, and there has been a construction of a so-called outdoor "spontaneous sports field". The connections by public transportation, to and from Ronna, are fairly sufficient. There are five bus lines that go to different parts of the Södertälje city.

Initially there were two primary schools buildings and one secondary school in the area, but the two primary school buildings have been closed and the primary school is currently located in the building of the secondary school. The city district of Ronna contains five children's day-care centres. One is a day-care centre for asylum seeking children. There is also one housing block for the elderly.

Because of a high crime rate in the last ten years, Ronna suffers from a negative image, and in the Swedish national media, Ronna is often compared to other problematic city districts in Sweden like Rinkeby [Stockholm] or Rosengård [Malmö].

Demography

As previously mentioned, the initial residents of the area were the workers of the industries of Södertälje – most of them "national" migrants from the northern parts of Sweden and from Finland. The economic recession in the early 1970s radically reduced the need for workers. As a result, a number of flats in Ronna became vacant. At that time, a number of refugees from Turkey and Lebanon were to settle in Södertälje, aided by the World Federation of Christian Churches, which helped them get out of the refugee camps in the Middle East. The initial immigrant settlement resulted in a flow of migration to Södertälje, in particular from the Middle East. The estimated number of citizens of Middle Eastern descent is currently at approximately 18,000 to 20,000.

Today, Ronna is an area of ethnic minority domination – approx. 85% of the population is made up of Assyrian/Syrians and Iraqis. Only the residential area of Hovsjö has a larger number of inhabitants with a higher rate of

foreign descent. Over the years, Ronna has been facing a steady population increase. Altogether, about 7 500 inhabitants live in the area.

Employment and education

Ronna's employment rate is approximately 45%, which is a very low figure compared to Södertälje. Approximately 24% of the inhabitants receive some sort of public economic support. The figures fluctuate, depending on the general economic situation in Sweden, but the data has been fairly constant during the last ten years. The educational levels are lower than in the overall city of Södertälje, and the school results among the secondary school-leavers are also on a lower level than the average in the city.

Public intervention history

Since the 1990s, the municipalities/cities and the national government have agreed on urban development in certain deprived areas in the context of the Urban Development Initiative. There are local development agreements on the integrated regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods between 21 cities/municipalities and the national government. Södertälje is one of them, carrying out four local action plans to develop four deprived neighbourhoods in Södertälje, one of them with Ronna as its focus.

In this context, there have been several initiatives to secure citizens' participation in the urban development process. Also in the district of Ronna, local parliaments, local neighbourhood councils and local consultative boards have been tested as part of local support.

During 2007, Södertälje participated in the Urbact I Support for Cities. The main focus was on one of the deprived neighbourhoods of Södertälje. The participation led to an invitation from Duisburg, Germany to be a part in the RegGov thematic network. Since Södertälje has taken part in national programs to regenerate the city's deprived neighbourhoods, and so far most of the measures have had a social approach, the URBACT- project initiative brings in a new dimension of integration and multilevel governance to the urban development process,

not to mention the new dimension of the environment and infrastructure.

II. Problems & challenges

The analysis of previous programmes, initiatives and projects implemented in Ronna in the past has shown that most of the initiatives, no matter how much positive effect they had on an individual level for residents in Ronna, always had different decisive limitations.

Most of all, they were always *time-limited*, according to the specific rules of the programmes and policies implemented, and did not deal with the problems for a duration that might have offered chances for truly sustainable success. Secondly, they were – in most cases – *focused on public intervention and investment only*, leading to the consequence that success was often too limited, and once public support, subsidies and funding ended, the area was left alone again and processes of positive change and development were interrupted.

Thirdly, and most importantly in terms of limitations, they *never put a focus on a really structural development* of Ronna, but rather looked at it as an area that only needed help and support without any real attempt to provide opportunities and chances to change people from recipients of social transfer payments and support to a strong element of Södertälje – contributing actively to the successful and sustainable development of the entire city.

The main objective and purpose of the current development of an Integrated Local Action Plan for a sustainable development of Ronna is to make a targeted effort to overcome the limitations of previous initiatives, and to design and implement a model for a more successful and sustainable approach to Integrated Neighbourhood Development in Ronna. If such a model can be implemented successfully with a lasting and more structural success, its benefits will not be limited to Ronna only, but it can also serve as a model for a comprehensive and sustainable regeneration and development of other disadvantaged areas and neighbourhoods in Södertälje.

Problems

The main weaknesses and risks for a successful and sustainable development of Ronna in its current condition are certainly the following key aspects:

- Ronna's spatial, social and functional isolation within the urban and regional context, which means the city centre of Södertälje and the Stockholm region.
- The existence of an “outsider” image that is mostly negative, as opposed to the real situation and quality of life in Ronna – partially a consequence of this isolation.
- The character of Ronna as a rather mono-structured housing and residential area with a lack of employment opportunities and economic activities, which are a precondition for any sustainable neighbourhood development.

Instead of seeing them as threatening elements of public neighbourhood life, it is important to make young people integrated members of the local community with a real perspective in life. It is also important to secure the participation of inhabitants in the development process. That means: how to create strong ethnic minority communities partners in urban regeneration and in civic society and thereby establish new forms of lasting and successful co-operation and co-production with strong ethnic minority groups.

Challenges

One of the great challenges is how to convert a larger mono-structured housing estate into a lively urban neighbourhood that is attractive for various social groups and lifestyles and enriching for the competitiveness of the entire city. The specific challenge of the city is the regeneration of Ronna and the involvement of the inhabitants in the process at the same time. Urban development and regeneration in combination with a commitment to improve social factors such as local democracy, education level, language skills and employment will generate a sustainable development for the neighbourhoods. That will strengthen Södertälje and make it a more attractive and competitive municipality.

Environmental and physical needs

The planning ideals from the 1960s are somewhat antiquated. There is a real demand for a more comprehensive change. The environmental issues of today bring out the needs for new solutions for energy, heating and waste. This is also of concern for Ronna. The housing stock of Ronna must be upgraded and the residents' awareness of and participation in these measures must grow. Additional physical and infrastructural solutions must be found, according to the idea of integrating the district of Ronna to the Södertälje city centre. The centre of Ronna itself must serve the residents in a better way. Apart from better commercial and public services of a different kind, there is an obvious need for some indoor public place like a meeting point, which has been non-existent since the public library and the leisure centre were closed down in the middle of the 1980s and 1990s.

People

Ronna, like the other three deprived neighbourhoods in Södertälje, fulfils an important function for Södertälje and its economic development: It is home to many newly arrived citizens, hosting them in their initial and most excluded and difficult phase following their arrival in Sweden. The integration achievements of areas like Ronna represent important “services” to the newcomers, and as such to the surrounding city, but at the same time this puts a high burden on the areas and the need for quality of life there. In concrete terms this means that Ronna has to cope with high numbers – and equally important, a high proportion – of residents in multiple deprived living situations.

Among these residents, there are the crucial challenges of low language skills and educational achievements, a lack of a coherent and positive identity as a starting point for personal progress and success and, as a result of the continuous feeling of disadvantage, a lack of perspectives and motivation. This is particularly dangerous for the large group of young people who would need such perspectives and motivation to develop a successful and independent life.



The existence of one large mono-cultural group in Ronna makes it even more difficult for these people to create links with the surrounding mainstream society and use cultural diversity as a source for successful neighbourhood and personal development. Such obstacles are even strengthened by simple elements such as the lack of usage of the Swedish language, a strong ethnic television, the lack of safe surroundings and the feeling of being “at home”, while at the same time preventing people from learning the Swedish language and developing a situation of “being at home” in their life and surroundings as citizens of Södertälje.

Economic growth and employment

As a consequence of Ronna's spatial, economic and cultural exclusion, the retail sector has more or less left the area, especially the centre of Ronna, resulting in redundant spaces and more and more illegal activities and “pockets” of black economy taking over. In recent years, the risk of a parallel society coming about in the City of Södertälje has been apparent. Ronna has developed into a very vulnerable situation, and the need for reorientation is crucial. With regard to elements of community development and the necessary conditions for personal growth and progress of the local community, the lack of a real “heart” for Ronna's people and public life, and the lack of a good *Community Centre* are decisive. The development of a Community Centre should stand as a symbol of change and an initiative towards the creation of small-scale and multicultural economic structures to support local growth and employment.

III. Potentials

Key Objective

The key objective of the Integrated Local Action plan is to provide Ronna and its stakeholders with a pathway to become a strong and independent neighbourhood that contributes actively to the positive development, wealth and success of Södertälje as a Swedish and European city.

Image

One of Ronna's most important problems, at the same time one of the most powerful obstacles standing in a way of a successful neigh-

bourhood development in Ronna, is its exaggeratedly *bad image in the city of Södertälje and the Stockholm region*, even in the Swedish context.

Ronna's poor image is created largely by stories in the newspapers – in most cases negative information that is always more interesting to the media than examples of positive news or attempts to show a comprehensive and complete picture of deprived neighbourhoods. For the development of a successful Integrated Action Plan for Ronna, it is essential to go beyond such a level of stereotypes and prejudices, and to also identify the *strengths and opportunities* of Ronna, since these should be the starting point for projects and activities.

Location

In terms of its location, Ronna is situated in a region and a city which demonstrate a good situation with regard to key topics such as quality of life, economic and employment situation and provision of infrastructure facilities. Therefore, Ronna can be regarded as part of an attractive environment with good living conditions and development potential.

Within the area, the most important strengths are certainly the housing stock and the green space. The housing stock in Ronna is characterised by a very good quality and level of maintenance, and also shows a high level of diversity in terms of size and standards. In theory, therefore, Ronna could be an attractive home for many urban residents. The high level of green space in the area is very obvious at first glance, creating an attractive housing and living environment and making Ronna at the same time a good place for families with children.

A further important asset for Ronna and its development potential is the good quality of public transport connections with the city centre.

Economic Potential and Opportunities

In terms of economic potential and opportunities, the proximity to Astra/Zeneca Medical Company is a relevant element is certainly decisive for all attempts to make Ronna and its local community stronger, more independent

and more integrated into the surrounding society and life. This already shows positive effects for Ronna – not only through the employment that some members of the local community have found there, but also through important and innovative initiatives like the “Science Centre / Science School” or the “Mentorship Programmes” in the local primary and secondary schools of Ronna – both programmes sponsored by Astra/Zeneca.

Looking at the general tendency in Europe, namely that for future employment the role of self-employment and the growth of micro-enterprises will play a very important role, Ronna must be regarded as well-prepared and ready to realise such potentials: With its *strong informal economy* and high degree of *entrepreneurial skills* in the local community, there are promising starting points for economic development strategies and projects that are available – ready to be used, activated and developed into economic activities and jobs for the area. Given the fact that the district of Ronna is certainly among the strongest neighbourhoods in Södertälje when it comes to the question of knowledge of different cultures and languages, it becomes obvious that such economic development strategies should have a strong focus on *small-scale international economy* – a focus that would not only help develop and strengthen Ronna, but at the same time would be a valuable contribution to the development of a stronger and more sustainable economic structure of Södertälje as a city.

A very recent initiative from the National Government is the proposal to create an “*economic free zone*” in some of the most deprived city districts in Sweden. There are 38 city districts identified within the context of deprivation, and Ronna is one of them.

Social capital

Everybody who has made personal experiences of working with the local community in Ronna agrees that one of the strongest and most powerful development potentials of Ronna is its social capital. Commitment to the own neighbourhood, networking and the rich life of local associations have a long history in this

area. A number of Ronna citizens are active in business and small-scale services – especially restaurants, hairdressing, laundries and clothing. This is taking place on the basis of a very strong internal cohesion – ties of kinship and families are certainly strong among the Assyrian/Syrian residents.

The many young people in Ronna who will one day be able to set up their own family here if the perspectives of an independent life are created for them are a strong force to achieve and maintain a successful neighbourhood. The local school, as well as the local police station, are important infrastructure facilities of high quality, from which a lot of commitment for the development of Ronna is starting and already achieving success in many small projects, initiatives and activities.

IV. Expected impact and effects on the image

In retrospect, it has taken the district of Ronna more than 40 years to get where it is today. Most likely, neither Ronna nor the image of Ronna will change overnight. In the short term, the image of Ronna will be exposed to a change along the road of implementation of the local action plan, step by step. At the same time, this is a long-term process including a number of activities and a number of stakeholders over a number of years, beginning now and looking 20 years ahead. A *market research* measure will be executed to get a better insight into opportunities for a [re]vitalisation of the Ronna area.

A lot of work is already happening – measures already in the planning process and in action. As an outcome, in the future there will be no bleak headlines in the local or national media about unlawfulness and disorder. Instead, there will be success stories following the implementation of a communications and image strategy – a way to work systematically against the bad reputation of the area and to support the development of pride amongst the residents. All this change will not happen if Ronna does not meet the expected standards.



V. LSG: composition, important stakeholders, etc.

Initially, in the very beginning of the URBACT project in Ronna, there were two Local Groups in action – one of them a regular “meeting point” between the local stakeholders of the Municipality, the National Police, the local Congregations, some civic organisations. The aim of their meeting is safety and security. The other Local Group was a voluntary association of residents who initially had gathered to mobilise against the “bad media image of Ronna”. The representatives of the two local groups were invited to participate in the URBACT project.

Since one of the main themes of the URBACT project has been the regional governance and/or multi-level governance, representatives of the Stockholm Regional Planning Office and the Stockholm County Administrative Board were invited to join the project and the Local Support Group, as Södertälje and Ronna are regional parts in the Regional Planning Program.

The Local Support Group turned out not to be the stable “organisation” that the Ronna project might have wished for. Stakeholders lost interest, residents did not have the patience or endurance to follow the process which has now gone on for three years. Although the Local Support Group is what all its representatives and the stakeholders make of it – its unclear role in the process, most of the time with no mandate, no judicial power, no decision-making power, no funding of its own – sometimes creates a very insecure and weak position for itself. Simply put, the LSG does not have the strength or the stable continuity of an institution, and cannot be held responsible for the sustainable and continuous work over a long period of time that is needed for long-term processes of physical planning, construction and socio-economic change.

For the implementation of the Local Action Plan, the unstable Local Support Group will change. The LAP proposes the establishment of a joint *Urban Development Company* between the Municipality of Södertälje, the Housing Company of Telge, the Housing

Company of Graflunds/ACTA and Ginata AB. The Urban Development Company will take the lead in the development process. To be able to continue a long-term sustainable development process, the leadership of the process must gain “muscles”. The public authority stakeholders, i.e. the Police, the National Labour Agency, the Social Services of the Municipality et cetera, already have *regular forms and models for cooperation* in various fields and sectors. They will continue in a joint Local Support Group as a reference group.

The development process must also connect to the overall regional planning in the Stockholm region. So far, only some *regional representation* is on board in the process. The structures and the directives within the Managing Authority have not explicitly served any focus in the development process in the URBACT-project. However, it is not only an issue of funding. It is also of great interest to the total outcome of the results - the objective of sustainable growth – in the 2007-2013 period in the Stockholm Region. For the LAP implementation, this multi-level governance problem has to be solved.

The participatory process of the residents in Ronna will be served by the establishment of a *Ronna Consultative Body*.

VI. Action fields of the LAP: brief report and strategic aims

The District of Ronna – a vision

Ronna will be

- a sustainable city district in a sustainable society – ecologically, socially and financially
- a residential area for all kinds of citizens/residents disregarding their experiences, their qualifications, their age, their sex, their wealth and their descent
- a socially cohesive district area representing a profound sense of home and belonging to Södertälje and the region
- a city district area with a distinct architectural quality, a mixture of housing alternatives and a distinct cultural and environmental milieu



- a model of good practice for the transformation and development of the “Million Homes Programme” of the 1960s into a modern and upgraded form of urbanity
- a city district representing prosperous businesses in a local as well as a global context

VII. Planned projects and their objectives

Action fields of the LAP

The analysis of the needs of Ronna, as well as the results and recommendations presented so far, have mainly been dealing with conceptual, organisational and strategic questions – the very crucial “software” of any sustainable regeneration and development process. Even though these aspects need to have an important role, it seems equally important not to forget the content while discussing the form – the projects and activities.

1. Relevant activities and projects in planning or preparation:

The activities and projects in planning or preparation – to be developed and financed in order to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable regeneration of the Ronna neighbourhood.

a) Area: The Urban Structure of Ronna

Main objectives: Ronna shall represent the criteria for a sustainable city district, with a distinct and significant physical and architectural outcome, as a regeneration model for other districts. Residents of Ronna shall develop a great sense of pride, safety as well as a sense of being at home in their neighbourhood.

Over the last ten years, applications for around 400 entities of housing constructions per year have been submitted to the Planning department of the Municipality of Södertälje. Last year a new policy decision was made in the local parliament on the issue of a new “housing” programme for the construction of 2000 flats, including apartment blocks, semi-detached houses and villas. Included in the program was also the establishment of new shopping malls, services, green parks and public culture and leisure facilities. The new housing programme reflects an ambitious standpoint regarding environmental and energy-saving issues.

Actions: The district of Ronna, with its uniqueness and typical 1960s architecture, is a part of this general development programme. There are chances and challenges. With respect to the existing architectural structure and infrastructure, its buildings, streets, pathways, centre etc. – *a deeper analysis of Ronna’s physical preconditions* and previous planning should be made as a first step. Subsequent recommendations should lead to a preliminary *competition between architects* to formulate the specific housing and infrastructure agenda for Ronna. *A European Competition for European Architects* under the age of 40 could be a thrilling possibility. The citizens of Ronna should take an active part in the process through their forum in the *Local Consultative Body*, while the coordination of the partnership between the local stakeholders should be organised in a *Joint Development Company* between public and private interests in the area, mainly the Housing Companies. The Development Company will finance a *Local Area Coordinator* to start work immediately.

List of Actions:

Analysis of Ronna’s physical preconditions
Architects’ Competition
European Competition
Residents’ Local Consultative Body
A Joint Development Company
A Local Area/District Coordinator

Financing: The development of the Ronna Urban Structure and Infrastructure will be financed by resources from the Joint Development Company - *private and public funding*. Resources will also be applied for from *the Regional Fund* of the Stockholm Region.

b) Area: Business and economic growth

Main objectives: The commercial centre of Ronna shall provide attractive public and private services for customers and a platform to support and create businesses and entrepreneurship. International business relations – especially in connection to the respective Middle Eastern countries - shall be elaborated and built upon. Private enterprise shall be on a level with Södertälje.



Positive business and economic actions in Ronna are reflected in Södertälje, and vice versa. The general support and actions toward business and economic growth that are promoted in the municipality are intended to prepare the way for new small and medium sized companies and businesses to access not only the local market, but also the global one.

Actions: With this point in view, a special focus should be given to the support of *business ideas towards the Middle East*, based on that fact that the citizens of Ronna have a deep knowledge of language, culture and networks regarding Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. The Chamber of Commerce, The National Agency of Labour and the Association of International Businessmen/women should be able to produce a *Course in International Business Relations* to broaden competence among local businesspersons. The establishment of a *Ronna House of Business* could merge the varied interests and also function as incubator of new initiatives. To facilitate the access to localities to business, the housing companies should assist by *remodelling ground floor flats* to give them business functions. Ronna is also the candidate to become *the Centre of a Regional Bazaar*, an attractive commercial mall with “oriental” goods, food, beverages, clothing, restaurants, cafes etc. As mentioned earlier in the LAP, a *Market Research Study* shall be undertaken to identify the prerequisites. At present the National Government is compiling a report and analysis of the possibilities to introduce so-called “*free zones of enterprise*” in certain deprived city districts of Sweden. Ronna is mentioned as a target in the process.

List of Actions:

Market Research
 Business towards the Middle East
 Courses in International Business Relations
 A Ronna House of Business
 A Centre with Regional Bazaar
 Free zones of enterprise

Finance: The Ronna business and economic growth scheme will be financed by *resources* from *private* businesses and associations and adequate *public* authorities (Municipality, Natio-

nal Agencies, National Government). Financial support will also be applied for from the *Regional Fund*.

2. Relevant activities and projects being planned or carried out already:

Activities and projects already planned or carried out give a coherent overview and ideas for further development of cooperation and synergetic action.

a) Area: From unemployment to work

Main objectives: Frequency of employment shall increase for both men and women in Ronna. The number of unemployed residents in Ronna, young people as well as adults, men as well as women, shall decrease, compared to the general level in Södertälje and the Stockholm Region.

In official statistics, in Ronna only 45% of men and women between 20-64 years of age are working, and a large number of families depend on the social benefits, unemployment allowances and sick-leave allowances. The high rate of unemployment is for the most part a result of low education, inadequate skills, low Swedish language skills, but it also results from the fact that there is a scarcity of low-skilled jobs, and that sometimes there are discriminatory practices in the labour market. Research has shown that it generally takes between 7 and 8 years for an immigrant in Sweden to get properly established in the labour market. For migrant women the situation is even worse, since their individual “platform” often starts with the traditional idea of not participating in the labour market at all.

Actions: There are a number of actions and activities directed towards the unemployed citizens in Ronna, both men and women, from the age of 18 and upward. Most activities offer solutions to each individual, in accordance with each person’s respective needs and preconditions. To handle the fairly large numbers of unemployed and citizens who are dependant on the municipality social benefit system, *the One Stop Shop* – a close-knit financial and personnel cooperation between the Municipality of Södertälje, the National Agency of Labour and the National Insurance Agency – has been

set up to rationalise and facilitate the processing of the unemployed, with the intention to shorten the period that it takes to enter the labour market. The One Stop Shop has access to a number of measures for the “customer” – regular ones within each “mother-organisation”, but also a number of special projects. Among these are:

The Social Fund, Municipality of Södertälje, the National Labour Agency, a cooperation between eight “neighbour” municipalities and the regional business associations’ support for multi-level projects - the *National Matching* project and the *Regional Matching* project. Both projects are directed toward the support of the unemployed and the employers to match the needs of the employer and the skills of the unemployed. Recently, the new creation of the public and private joint venture companies of *Telge Manpower Jobstart AB*, *Telge Peab AB* and *Telge Tillväxt AB* have been established to facilitate the active cooperation between the private and the public sector to cope with a number of objectives: to decrease the number of unemployed young people, unemployed immigrants and long-term unemployed citizens. *Telge Tillväxt AB* is supported by the Social Fund.

The companies are producing their own project models and methods, including coaching, Swedish language courses, traineeship, skills development etc. In the case of *Telge Peab AB*, the outcome should also be the regeneration of flats and housing blocks of the late 1960s and 1970s, plus the construction of new apartment blocks according to the Municipality Plan “Attractive City”.

In addition to the projects mentioned, Social Funding is requested to support a forthcoming project concerning *the job market exclusion of the Roma population*.

List of Actions:

One Stop Shop
National Match-making
Regional Match-making
Telge Manpower Jobstart
Telge Peab
Telge Tillväxt

Project to combat job market exclusion of the Roma population

Financing: Alongside financing from *regular public authority budgets* and *private interests*, the *Social Fund* supports the National and Regional Match-making projects and the Roma project.

b) Area: Education

Main objectives: Educational levels of residents in Ronna, young people as well as adults, shall be on the same levels as in Södertälje on the whole, and shall aspire to the same levels as the average in the Stockholm Region.

The educational outcome of young people in Ronna is a very crucial factor in the social situation of the district. Only 55.7% of the students in the 9th grade of secondary school (grundskolan) obtained a pass to the upper secondary school in 2009. Looking back on a period of ten years, these low figures have been more the rule than the exception. In the adult population, the educational level is lower than the average in Södertälje, not to mention that the educational level in Södertälje is lower than the overall situation in the Stockholm Region.

Actions: The local primary and secondary school, Ronnaskolan, has formulated an agenda with a strong focus on the students’ development of *skills in the Swedish language* and on the *general basic school curricula*. Students who do not cope are offered an extra “*summer school*” period during the summer vacations to become more proficient in compulsory subjects. To stimulate the students’ activities and interest in their schoolwork, the Ronnaskolan cooperates with the AstraZeneca Company in a project called *Mentorship Sweden*. The project offers professional and individually-based tuition and assistance to students by AstraZeneca employees. There is also a “*Read & Write*” project in cooperation with the Södertälje branch of the *International Rotary Association*, with the intention to support students toward mastering the Swedish language.

The Municipality of Södertälje offers basic primary, secondary and upper secondary *schooling for adults* in the Municipal Adult

Education Courses. The Adult Education programme also provides *Swedish language courses* for immigrants of different levels. For those in need of vocational training, there is a variety of schools, courses and colleges with a choice of subjects. Adult education is regarded by the public authorities as a very important measure to fight unemployment. Therefore, adult education is a part of the regular system of measures and actions offered to citizens to gain a better access to the labour market.

List of Actions:

Focus on
 Skills in the Swedish language
 General basic school curricula
 Extra Summer Vacation School
 Mentorship Sweden
 Read & Write Project

Finance: Costs for education are provided by the public authorities – municipality and national government – via their institutions for primary, secondary, upper secondary school and adult education. The executors of education are public or private, but still financed by public funding. Certain projects, like *Mentor Sweden* and the *Read & Write Project*, are co-financed by the private enterprises involved. *Social funding* does exist in some of the vocational training tuition.

c) Area: Public health

Main objectives: Residents in Ronna exercise their civil and political rights within the framework of an active and equal participation in the social life of Södertälje. Social and economic inequalities shall decrease due to positive results from the actions in the areas of employment, education, business and social cohesion.

Actions: Public health is more than health as it relates to viruses and diseases. Public health includes a great number of social and economic factors with a direct or indirect effect on the individual's sense of well-being. Research also shows that newly arrived immigrants and refugees have a low standard of health. It is important to deal with these issues very soon after an immigrant's arrival. *The Health School* and *The Health Communicator* are two projects

that deal with the effects of the migratory processes on immigrants and refugees.

List of actions:

The Health School
 The Health Communicator

Finance: The projects are financed by the *County Council of Stockholm*, the *Municipality of Södertälje* and the *EU's Integration Fund*.

d) Area: Cultural, leisure, sports and civic life

Main objectives: All residents in Ronna shall have access to culture, leisure, sports and an enriching social life.

Actions: One of the most crucial target groups in Ronna is the youth. Although most of them attend primary and secondary school in the neighbourhood, in their free time they still tend to "live" in exclusion from the main society and turn their interest to criminal gangs. The Municipality of Södertälje and the National Police cooperate to tackle the situation by offering alternatives in a network called *ECS (Effective Cooperation in Södertälje)*. One main action is to move the *Youth Recreation Centre* from the outskirts to the centre of Ronna. This action will be coordinated with the construction of a *Community Centre/ Citizens' Centre* in the centre of Ronna.

List of actions:

ECS (Effective Cooperation with Södertälje Neighbourhood Police Office)
 Move of Youth Recreation Centre
 A Community Centre/ Citizens' Centre

Financing: The ECS network is financed by the *Municipality and the National Police*. *Regional funding* will be applied for as regards the construction of a Community Centre, which will also include the Youth Recreation Centre.

e) Area: Safety and security

Main objectives: All residents in Ronna should experience their neighbourhood as a safe and secure environment.

Actions: Over the last years there has been a high rate of crimes carried out in the centre of

Ronna. To come to terms with this, the National Police and the Municipality have intensified the cooperation in the network *ECS /Effective Cooperation in Södertälje*, and the *Neighbourhood Police Office* has increased the staff of patrolling policemen. Recently, a *Ronna Neighbourhood Safety Coordinator*, financed by the *Municipality's Safety and Security Programme*, has been installed to work proactively with the young people and the civic associations in the district. The coordinator should also assist *the Night-Walking Parents/Adults* in their effort to maintain a regular presence in the Friday/Saturday night-walks to keep an eye on what is happening in the area at those crucial times.

List of actions:

ECS (effective cooperation in Södertälje Neighbourhood Police Office)
Neighbourhood Police Office
Ronna Neighbourhood Safety Coordinator
Municipality's Safety and Security Programme
"The Night-Walking Parents" project

Financing: The activities are being financed by the *Municipality of Södertälje*, the *National Police*, the local civic associations and *voluntary work* by citizens.

f) Area: From exclusion to inclusion

Main objectives: Residents in Ronna shall make use of their civic, political and social rights to gain equality and a sense of full participation in Södertälje and in the Stockholm region. By the next general elections, the number of voters shall increase.

Actions: In the context of democracy, one of the challenges of an integrated development process is the active interest of the residents. It is also a challenge to convince and facilitate marginalised groups of residents to take an active interest in politics. Previous actions within the framework of the National Urban Initiative have shown that residents in Ronna can organise themselves into Consultative Neighbourhood Bodies and bring forth their viewpoints to the decision-makers. Such a *Consultative Neighbourhood Body* should be reconstructed with the assistance of a *Local Neighbourhood Coordinator*. A new *Community Centre* will serve as a meeting point for all sorts of residential

and civic actions taking place in the district. At the same time, the Community Centre will serve as an *Information Point* for all sorts of public authority information.

List of actions:

A Consultative Neighbourhood Body
A Local Neighbourhood Coordinator
A New Community Centre
A Public Information Point

Financing: The construction of a new Community Centre will hopefully be financed in part by the *Regional Fund*, while the activities in the Centre will be financed by the *Municipality of Södertälje*, most probably the *National Police* and the *Civic organisations/associations* in the district.

VIII. Monitoring (on the selection of the target area) & evaluation (on the implementation of the LAP)

Ronna has been one of the four Södertälje deprived residential districts in the National Urban Initiative since 1999. There is an agreement on Urban Development between the National Government and the Municipality, which requires a process of analysis and monitoring each year. For the last ten years, a monitoring report on Ronna, including data, statistics and the evaluation of aims and objectives from a number of specific sector indicators, has been presented. The analysis of the results might then have initiated revision of the actual local action plan regarding some of the sectors. To a certain extent, external evaluation expertise has been purchased. This process will continue in the present Local Action Plan for Ronna.

IX. LAP timetable

Regarding the entire process, the implementation of the LAP will require about 10 years from now.

Year 1:

Finalising the LAP and the decision-making process. Preparation of the application for



social funding and regional funding. Preparation of the implementation organisation. Preparation of budget and partner budgets. Regional, national and transnational networking.

Year 2:

Monitoring of ongoing actions. Evaluation of ongoing actions, strategies and results. Revision of the LAP. Revision of actions. Preparation of the implementation budgets. Decision-making concerning the implementation organisation. Initiation of infrastructural and physical actions. Preparation of budget and partner budgets – year 3. Regional, national and transnational networking.

Year 3:

Regional funding resources at work. Social funding at work. Monitoring of ongoing actions. Evaluation of ongoing actions, strategies and results. Revision of the LAP. Revision of actions. The implementation organisation at work. A certain number of actions at work. Preparation of budget and partner budgets – year 4. Regional, national and transnational networking.

Year 4-10:

General elections – locally, regionally, nationally. New EU-funding period 2013-2020. Regional funding resources at work. Social funding at work. Monitoring of ongoing actions. Evaluation of ongoing actions, strategies and results. Revision of the LAP. Revision of actions. The implementation organisation at work. A certain number of actions at work. Preparation of budget and partner budgets each year. Regional, national and transnational networking.

X. LAP financing

Compared to some of the URBACT- project partners in their regions and cities in Europe, the URBACT Ronna project has had no support so far from the Managing Authority at Tillväxtverket, Regional Branch. This means, at the moment, that the URBACT Ronna project has no guarantee of financial support from the Regional Fund. This has to be a prolonged process of the LAP, in which applicable parts of the LAP will be transformed into an application to the MA and exposed to the competition among the total number of applicants.

With the uncertainty about external funding, the implementation of certain parts of the LAP will most probably be delayed or postponed. A number of projects are supported by the Social Fund and they do continue. In terms of time, this means that projects within the socio-economic sector will continue, and some of the LAP actions can be executed within Municipality and partner budgets.

XI. Impact of the transnational exchange for the LAP production

In the very early phase of the URBACT project, the Municipality of Södertälje mentioned the requirement of inputs from the partners of the RegGov-Network for the following issues:

- Knowledge in how to work with strong ethnic minorities, to make them partners in the regeneration process.
- Methods in how to create strong and lasting networks with inhabitants.
- Knowledge in creating a regeneration process that attracts new investors, inhabitants and businesses.

So far, the transnational exchange in itself has not really achieved the initial aims and motives of the Södertälje partner: how to create and overcome national and ethnic boundaries of culture to reach trust and mutual understanding between the minority and the majority; how to create and maintain a long-standing network with low-income and poorly educated inhabitants of a district; how to make a melting pot of a number of diverse individual, private, business and public interests in a deprived area – in other words, how to create a sustainable vision for an overall win-win situation and an attractive future in a deprived area. The crucial questions are still there and elaboration is ongoing. This is not to say that the Södertälje partner is not involved in the process itself. On the contrary; but might there not be some “transnational” exchange of keys that we have overlooked, some “transnationally” exchanged tools we have not recognised? Processes in real time are very complex.

This is also mirrored by the variety and diversity of conditions that each partner city represents.



In the project reality, it is a fact that the partner cities/regions in the RegGov project represent an extremely diverse experience in historical, social, demographic, economic/financial, organisational and political terms. From a congregated point of view, the northern/western cities/regions, the eastern cities/regions and the southern cities/regions represent three different dimensions of experiences and approaches within the framework of development work. We've come as far as to compare different sets of standards in the governing processes and to understand some of the intrinsic structural problems that exist in each partner's respective circumstances.

To a certain extent, the transnational networking process has been more of a lesson from the competitive "welfare states" of the northern/western cities/regions to the convergence states of the eastern cities/regions and the southern cities/regions. This is fair enough, but it has also created an imbalance of giving and taking - sometimes similar to the relation between the north and the south or the developed countries' aid and assistance to developing countries. This is a notion to reflect upon.

In a more profound reflection on the transnational exchange, the agenda has very often relied on "good models" of governance in the partner cities/regions of Germany and the Netherlands. The background is that it is easy to believe that the "governance" models of

Germany and the Netherlands should be applied in all the partner cities/regions. This is not a criticism but a fact to reflect upon, especially when the general domination of certain EU Member States is taken into consideration, as well as the extent to which the remodelling of the EU political and economical landscape is undermining other forms or models of alternative governance.

On the other hand, for each and every partner, the transnational exchange and experience has pushed the competitive side of the process. Every partner wants to produce an excellent LAP – with or without the solution of certain peculiar and very local problems. There is no doubt that it has been a very inspiring and challenging journey in the company of engaged, experienced and enthusiastic representatives of the cities/regions wishing and working for the best and highly committed to developing their local target area and making the small local world a better place for everyone. Indeed, the Lead Partner and the RegGov Expert have supported the network and its partners in making the most out of the project. In particular, partners from the convergence countries have been given extra support regarding their work and their participation in the project in the aftermath of the economic crisis. On top of that, the Swedish partner has had substantial back-up from the Lead Partner to try to get the Swedish MA to the "round table".



Imprint

Regional Governance of Sustainable Integrated Neighbourhood Development – RegGov
RegGov is a Fast Track Thematic Network in the URBACT II Programme.

Further information is available under: urbact.eu/reg_gov

Local Action Plan

English abstract

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City of Södertälje, Sweden

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Ronna

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URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 300 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT is part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund).

Integrated approaches to the development of deprived urban neighbourhoods have proved to be successful in many old EU member states over the last decades. Crucial factors for success are efficient co-operation and a high level of trust between cities and their managing authorities. The challenge is how to develop, implement and fund such policies at a broad European level. The REGGOV Network focused on making practical experiences accessible and supporting partners to develop and implement new integrated strategies for sustainable neighbourhood and urban development.

www.urbact.eu/reg_gov



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